

NICWA NEWS

Quarterly Newsletter • Winter 2021



The **LATEST**
INSIDE

Finding Strength in Family



National Indian Child Welfare Association
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The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) is a private, nonprofit, membership-based organization dedicated to the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families. Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, NICWA serves tribes, individuals, and private organizations throughout the United States and Canada by serving as the most comprehensive source of information on American Indian child welfare and acting as the only national Native organization focused on building tribal capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Our Mission

The National Indian Child Welfare Association is dedicated to the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

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Contents

4 Policy

5 Inside NICWA

6 Finding Strength in Family

8 Programs

10 Trainings and Resources

11 Membership

NICWA News is the quarterly newsletter for members and donors of the National Indian Child Welfare Association. Membership is available in multiple levels starting at \$35.

For reprint requests, additional copies, or other information, contact us at info@nicwa.org

Message from the Executive Director

Dear NICWA Members, Sponsors, Donors, and Friends,

Family. In my Alutiiq language, *ilat*. The theme of this issue of *NICWA News* is finding strength in family. In Native communities and cultures, the definition of family is expansive. It includes blood relatives, adopted relatives, and fictive kin. At NICWA, we say that family is defined by the child or person. Family is whomever a child identifies for themselves as their family; it's whoever feels like family to them. Similarly, in many Native languages, there is literally no word for "orphan" because children were never without family, without people who were responsible for nurturing and caring for them. If birth parents were unable to care for a child, extended family or other community members would do so.

From our family, we derive our sense of identity—who we are. We gain an understanding of our place in the world—who we are connected to and to whom we belong. We learn our values and our responsibilities. Our families ground us, provide our foundation, and endow us with and help us build the skills and knowledge to navigate the world around us, including human, animal, and natural relationships.

When we think back to how our ancestors survived in very difficult circumstances and harsh environments, family was key. Family shared the burdens, increased the resources, and multiplied the humor and joy. Still today, our families can be an important source of strength in how we cope, manage, heal, and thrive.

During the pandemic, some of us have been quarantined with our family—in some cases, multiple generations of family—while others of us have been separated from them. As I write this letter, I am looking at framed photos of my parents, my siblings, my aunts and cousins, and my nephews and nieces on my walls. This is the longest period in my life that I have gone without seeing any of my family members in person. It has been 14 months since I have touched or hugged any of them. We do our best with FaceTime and Zoom, but it's not the same as cooking with my siblings or sitting at the dining room table with my parents talking over a cup of coffee. It's not the same as holding my niece on my lap while she reads to me; she's learned to read during the pandemic, and she's only been able to read to me over FaceTime.

In spite of this isolation, we find ways to connect. My family has comforted each other, helped with homework, played games, sang songs and danced together, eaten meals, celebrated birthdays, and opened gifts by Zoom. I imagine that you have done many of the same things. As my dad says, "We're so fortunate for this technology. At least we can see each other."

A sense of family and the connection to people, community, and culture larger than ourselves is a central element of our mental health and well-being. Finding strength in our family and intentionally tending to these relationships helps us to stay connected to who we are and to be fed by the sense of belonging and purpose that comes from our connection. We'd love to hear from you by email or on social media about how you've found strength in your family and nurtured your connection during the pandemic. Please reach out to us at info@nicwa.org or tag @NativeChildren on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) and @nicwa1983 on [Instagram](#).

May you be blessed by your family and find strength in your connection to them.

Sarah F. Kastelic

Sarah Kastelic, PhD
(Alutiiq)



Congress Approves Omnibus Appropriations Bill

Bill includes funding for federal government programs and COVID-19 relief

On December 21, 2020, the House and Senate approved legislation to fund the federal government for the rest of the fiscal year (September 30, 2021) and provide funding for COVID-19 relief activities. The Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2021 was signed into law by the president on December 27, 2020 (P.L. 116-260). The appropriations bill was attached to a COVID-19 relief package to create a bill with just under 5,600 pages. Members of Congress were glad to get the appropriations and COVID relief packages approved after months of debate and political maneuvering, but many were frustrated that there was almost no time for review before the actual votes. The final vote on the legislation came after four different continuing resolutions were passed to keep the federal government funded (one in September and three in December) and ongoing differences on what should be in a COVID-19 relief bill. The process was also complicated by veto threats from the president as well.

The appropriations language funds most government programs at FY 2020 levels with increased funding in some programs (see below). Key Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) tribal child and family program funding levels in FY 2021 include:

- BIA Indian Child Welfare Act On-Reservation Program: \$1.5 million increase to \$15.9 million.
- BIA Indian Child Welfare Act Off-Reservation Program: \$1.0 million (same as FY 2020 level).
- BIA Welfare Assistance: \$2.0 million increase to \$78 million.

COVID-19-specific funds for tribal nations in FY 2021 include:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: additional \$125 million for tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian health organizations to provide behavioral health services.
- Administration for Community Living: additional \$7 million for tribal nutrition programs serving adults that qualify under the Older Americans Act.
- Extension of deadline for expending CARES Act Relief Funds for states and tribes to December 31, 2021 (earlier deadline was December 30, 2020).

Some additional federal child and family program highlights include:

- Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Tribal Court Improvement Program: increase of \$500,000 for tribal court improvement programs related to COVID-19 activities in FY 2021 (tribes eligible to apply for discretionary grants).
- ACF Chafee Independent Living Program: additional \$400 million for Chafee-related activities and additional flexibility and expansion of program benefits in several areas through FY 2021 (tribes eligible to enter into agreements with states for the funds or receive direct funding).
- ACF Prevention Services under Title IV-E: increase in

reimbursement rate for prevention services provided under Title IV-E from 50% to 100% in FY 2021.

- ACF Title IV-B, Subpart 2 program: additional \$85 million in Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds in FY 2021 (tribes receive 3% set-aside).
- ACF Kinship Navigator program: temporarily waives evidence-based requirements for Kinship Navigator programs funded under Title IV-E and increases reimbursement from 50% to 100% in FY 2021 (tribes operating the Title IV-E program through agreements with states or directly are eligible to receive funds).
- Department of Education Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): streamlines the FAFSA process to assist foster care youth who are applying for financial aid for higher education.
- Streamlining the process for Family Unification Program vouchers for foster care youth who are at risk to be homeless to make it easier for them to access these housing benefits. Public housing agencies work with public child welfare agencies to help coordinate these vouchers and housing needs for foster care youth at risk of becoming homeless.

NICWA Meets with Biden-Harris Transition Team

When a new presidential administration begins preparing to take office, they develop a transition team that involves people with experience in different areas of government services and working with different populations. The Biden-Harris transition team was established before the election and has been in operation since the election. NICWA was contacted to meet with transition team members who have experience in Department of Health and Human Services programs, like child welfare, and in Bureau of Indian Affairs programs. Prior to contact with the transition team members, NICWA contributed to the Indian child welfare section of the [National Congress of American Indians' transition document](#) that has been disseminated to the Biden-Harris team. NICWA discussed critical policy gaps that have created barriers to Native children and families receiving child welfare services and concerns about implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act. The transition team has been reaching out to Indian Country through several different tribal organizations and NICWA has been participating in as many of those as possible to ensure child welfare issues are discussed. As the new administration gets ready to take office and new political appointments for federal agencies are announced, NICWA will be reaching out to encourage tribal outreach and engagement and sharing our experiences with Indian child welfare issues.

Visit www.nicwa.org/policy-update for the latest on child and family policy-related news.

Welcome NICWA's New Staff!



Elizabeth Brando (Cherokee)
Development Director

As a leader in development and fundraising, Elizabeth Brando has raised over \$10 million for higher education and cultural institutions, with additional experience in multinational banking and project management in Silicon Valley. She has been building and fostering collaborative professional relationships since 1995. Brando, an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation, relocated to upstate New York from Manhattan 12 years ago, and has consulted on several projects throughout Indian Country. Her entrepreneurial expertise, combined with a strong intellectual curiosity, gives her unique insight into the cultivation and stewardship of diverse constituents. Elizabeth currently resides in upstate New York with her family and looks forward to enjoying everything that Portland has to offer. When she's not working diligently to raise support for Native children, she is probably watching a movie, reading a book, or playing fetch with Daisy their black lab.

Highlights from Mental Health Professionals' Coffee Break



NICWA created the Mental Health Professionals' Coffee Break as a way of engaging with and providing support for mental health providers in Native communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Led by Terry Cross (Seneca), MSW, ACSW, LCSW, founder and senior advisor for NICWA and Tessa Baldwin (Inupiaq), LMSW, itinerant therapist in rural Alaska and NICWA board member, these sessions have been hosted each month since August 2020. The hour-long, informal, virtual get-together has become a place for sharing best practices, discussing challenges, providing peer support, and finding connection during a disrupted period of human interaction. Regardless of whether it is your first time joining or your fourth, the Mental Health Professionals' Coffee Break is always welcoming and open to all mental health providers. We hope these meetings support mental health providers in their critical work on behalf of Native children and families by "helping the helpers." You can find the registration information in each month's membership bulletin; stay tuned to NICWA's social media for date reminders.

ICWA For Families

In celebration of Native American Heritage Month, NICWA and our Protect ICWA Campaign partners, the National Congress of American Indians, the Association on American Indian Affairs, and the Native American Rights Fund, hosted a social media campaign to celebrate the 42nd anniversary of the Indian Child Welfare Act, its impact on American Indian and Alaska Native children and families, and the broad and diverse base of support for the act.

A broad group of tribes, organizations, and influencers voiced their support for the campaign:

- 57 organizations/individuals used the #ICWAforFamilies hashtag on social media platforms
- 501 #ICWAforFamilies mentions on Twitter
- 879 total ICWA mentions



Did You Know?

ICWA's active efforts lessens trauma and supports children, families, and communities.

#ICWAforFamilies

PROTECT
ICWA
CAMPAIGN





I have four kids: 11-year-old twins, one 18-year-old, and one 20-year-old. When COVID-19 locked down our community, I was so happy to have all four of my kids home with me. My daughter's dorm was closed, and she moved back home. I was able to spend a lot of time with my oldest son who was applying for college in fall 2020.

While at home with my family, I had the chance to take our Lushootseed language classes which moved online. The traditional language of the Suquamish People is Lushootseed. My kids aren't in a place where they want to sit down and learn those things while they are already in a virtual learning environment, but they are really open to me coming in and teaching them words that I learn. I learned how to say "I love you," so I say that to them regularly. The word for lazy is pronounced "chill chill" and it works out conveniently for this time. We'll say "ʔəsčilčil čəd," or "I am lazy," and we'll just say that around the house to each other.

As an Indigenous mother, finding ways to incorporate culture into our daily lives has been an important connection piece for my family. I know when they are at another stage in life they are going to recognize these things that they had, because I am recognizing these things my dad would say to us. He didn't know very much Lushootseed, but he would still incorporate it. We would always say "dog" and "cat," and we always talked about eating in Lushootseed.

Finding Strength in Family

By Robin Sigo

As someone who travels a lot for work, it was strange to be grounded by the pandemic, but I also felt so relieved. I fly to DC on a regular basis, often monthly, and I am grateful to have a job that is so supportive of being able to work from home. I do research and strategic development, which includes running the Suquamish Foundation, and I serve as the treasurer of the Suquamish Tribal Council. I am a member of the Suquamish Tribe in Washington State. My work includes lobbying, working on what adverse childhood experiences look like in a classroom, providing trauma responsive services to meet families where they are at, and supporting Indian child welfare policies and how they are implemented.

During the pandemic, families have been urged to stay home. A lot of people had a very hard 2020. I am fortunate that I didn't. This past year I've been missing my family and my extended family, but at the same time we've figured out intentional and safe ways to be around them. Now, I always have a camping chair in my car. When I get a chance to talk to my sister and dad, I park it outside their living room window. My mom and I meet up and park our cars with the windows down and our masks on. It's hard, but it is worth it to keep each other safe.



Robin, Everly (11), and Corinna (11) around the table getting their work done



Robin gathering rosehips

Taking these classes is returning me to my childhood and helping me find the things that were so important to me that I didn't realize at the time. I'm able to instill this in my kids now, and the slower pace lends itself to that.

My Lushootseed language teacher talks about the way the land wants to hear this language. The land didn't get to hear it, and the land is happier when it is being spoken. When I think of my dad using that language with me and my brothers and sisters when we were kids, and now learning why it's so important, I know it was revolutionary. He was decolonizing our world in a way that I couldn't possibly fathom at the time as someone who just wanted to fit in with everyone else. And now I know how important our language is. The land wants to hear it, and is happy to hear it, and that makes me happy too. It's a profound spiritual fulfillment. There is a warmth and love when using the language of our ancestors, and I had no idea how powerful it was until I started this process.

I was always raised with an auntie, uncle, and cousin culture. In Lushootseed, your brothers, sisters, and cousins are called the same thing. The language uses the same word—"squ or suq'wa?". Kylie, my daughter who is in her first year of college, is my second cousin twice removed, and I've been her foster mommy since she was a baby. When I was 25 years old, my cousin called me and said she needed my help. Everything in me was saying, "of course." Even then, I was confident in my ability to parent in a lot of different ways. It's not uncommon in tribal communities, or even smaller communities, to help raise other people's children. I remember I had a caseworker who said to me after Kylie was with us for six months, "Well, I don't know if Kylie's mom is going to get it together. Go ahead and start bonding." My husband and I had to laugh about that. As if we hadn't been bonding since we met her. Part of how Kylie was raised was how I was raised, knowing who she was, how she fit in our family, how we fit into our extended family, and how we fit in community.

If we think about navigating the pandemic in terms of being aunties and uncles, it's not hard to wear a mask and do all of the other things we need to do. Our families, communities, and cultures challenge the idea of the nuclear family that isn't working for both Native and non-Native families, especially during the pandemic. The virus didn't change these truths, but it challenged me to make sure I was still living my cultural values. How do I check in with people? How can I help someone when they are struggling? Our role is to protect and to love and to build resilience. When I think about it from that perspective, it's easy.

Robin Sigo is a member of the Suquamish Tribe in Washington State, where she serves as treasurer on the Suquamish Tribal Council and director of the Research and Strategic Development Department. Robin has a passion for tribal child welfare, with a background in social work and as a tribal foster parent, decades of research experience in tribal youth prevention and adverse childhood experiences, and sustained advocacy for tribal child welfare and mental health issues. As a tribal council member, Robin is focused on upholding tribal sovereignty, budget planning, community mental health, strategic planning, and addressing poverty. Most importantly, Robin is a mother to four amazing kids ages 11–20.



We Are Resilient

Thanks to generous supporters like you, we are starting 2021 off on a positive note ensuring that future generations of Native children stay connected to their families, communities, and culture. Our 2020 Giving Tuesday was up 128% over last year. A special thank you to Spirit Rock Consulting for providing a matching gift opportunity. Additionally, we were fortunate to be included again in the Portland-based Give!Guide initiative; not only did we meet our \$9,500 goal, we surpassed it by 165% raising \$25,212 from 440 amazing donors.

If you have questions about making a gift today, please contact Elizabeth Brando, Development Director, at elizabeth@nicwa.org or 315-412-8539.

A More Equitable Future: Touchstones of Hope Dialogues



When striving towards a more equitable, safe, and culturally specific child welfare system, community conversation is often the best place to start. A 2005 dialogue began the Touchstones of Hope movement. At an international convening, Indigenous and non-Indigenous child welfare leaders in Canada and the United States, with help from Indigenous representatives from Australia, New Zealand, and Central and South America, began to discuss the growing international crisis of Indigenous children being overrepresented in the child welfare system. Together we explored the history of child welfare, the reasons behind the growing number of Indigenous children and youth entering the foster care system, and the values and beliefs needed to reshape the child welfare system to better serve Indigenous children, youth, and families. These conversations and actions led to the creation of [Reconciliation in Child Welfare: Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children, Youth, and Families.](#)

In November, NICWA and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada hosted the first session of a seven-part, bi-monthly dialogue series: *Reconciliation in Child Welfare: Touchstones of Hope*.

Reconciliation is at the core of this series as it provides a means of acknowledging the pain left behind by a deeply flawed system, while leading the way towards a more equitable future.

Reconciliation consists of four non-linear steps. The reconciliation process includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous people truth-telling about the harm the child welfare system has done to families, acknowledging that a new path forward is necessary, restoring by making changes to redress harm and ensure it doesn't happen again, and relating by working respectfully together toward our vision of a new system.

Reconciliation is guided by five principles: self-determination, culture and language, holistic approach, structural interventions, and non-discrimination. These principles are inspired by the values and cultures of Indigenous communities from around the world, and provide a framework for reconciliation, conversation, and the reimagining of child welfare structures. You can learn more and register for future Touchstone of Hope Dialogues at <https://www.nicwa.org/touchstones-of-hope-dialogues/>.

Child Welfare Resources for Families



The single most important thing is to keep your child safe and to communicate that to the child welfare case worker.

This year, NICWA is launching a new digital resource for families who encounter the child welfare system. The resource provides concrete things families can do to be prepared and to advocate for their child and family.

Families can find what to do if they are reported for child abuse and neglect, what to do early on if they are involved in a child abuse or neglect investigation, and what to do if their child is removed from their home. Here is a sneak peek of the kinds of questions we will answer and provide resources for:

- How does the child welfare system work?
- Are there additional requirements for American Indian or Alaska Native children?
- How should I prepare for a home visit from a child protective services investigator/worker?

The resource will also provide a list of related tips for families, resources for common questions, and two ready-to-download print and digital public service announcements for tribal communities. The resource will be available on our website, www.nicwa.org, in February 2021.

Resource: Tracing Native Ancestry

Every year, NICWA receives hundreds of requests from people all over the country seeking information about tracing their Native American ancestry. In response, we created a resource, "[Tracing Native Ancestry: A Guide to Responding to Inquiries](#)," that guides inquirers and service providers through the process of establishing tribal heritage.

Speaking to relatives is often the best way to trace family history. When armed with as much documentation as possible, a person can then begin the process of establishing a relationship with a tribe. Tribal governments each have their own standards and requirements for establishing tribal lineage and confirming enrollment, but obtaining genealogical confirmation is an important first step in the process.

The history of Native children being taken from their families and communities, and the lost records from the assimilationist period of federal Indian policy, can make tracing Native heritage a difficult process. NICWA's resource can provide inquirers with the first steps to establishing rewarding connections to their community and culture.



Pandemic Challenging Native Families in Child Welfare Systems

The pandemic has stretched already thin resources in many communities, especially for children and families at risk of becoming involved in the child welfare system.

Realities of the pandemic include greater unemployment and income insecurity, more challenging access to family support services, fewer childcare options, rising health care concerns, and schools being shutdown with classes going virtual. Tribal and urban Indian communities are some of the hardest-hit communities in these respects, and frequently the solutions are not easy to develop. While tribal and state child welfare systems have been working around the clock to adapt to the pandemic, there are still areas where the resources and solutions fall short.

One key area where child welfare agencies are challenged includes conducting visitation between parents and their children who have been removed and placed in foster care. Health concerns raised by both parents and foster families have often made scheduling and conducting visitation challenging. Some parents have jobs where they can't work from home and have limited childcare available, posing both health and childcare challenges. Many children at risk for child abuse and neglect live in families that are socially isolated and have fewer coping mechanisms for when their lives become difficult.

Child welfare systems work to help families access support from their extended family members and friends, such as respite care. The pandemic made these efforts more complicated, especially as we are staying indoors during the winter. Further, virtual support over a laptop or smartphone doesn't have the same effect that in-person support does. While there are challenges, many tribes are learning how to adapt to the virtual world. Visitations are occurring over Zoom or Skype; tribal and urban child welfare programs are providing more basic services, like food supplements; and tribes are providing new content through virtual formats for children and parents to ease social isolation and connect families with cultural activities, education, and entertainment. NICWA has been listening to your experiences and will continue to do so while providing resources where we can for families, tribal leaders, child welfare professionals, and others.

If you would like to learn more about these issues, see our COVID-19 website page at www.nicwa.org/coronavirus.

Virtual Trainings

**April Training Institute
Positive Indian Parenting Training and
Understanding ICWA, late April 2021**
www.nicwa.org/training

**Virtual 39th Annual Protecting Our Children
Conference, April 11–14, 2021**
www.nicwa.org/conference

The Steep and Steady Learning Curve of NICWA's Transition to Virtual Events

NICWA's events and training team has experienced a steep learning curve in the past year. In March, pivoting from an in-person event hosting over 1,200 attendees to a virtual conference in under two weeks was just the beginning of our journey and the many lessons learned in virtual training delivery. After NICWA's premier event, the Annual Protecting Our Children Conference, events and training and program staff as well as consultants adapted numerous existing NICWA curricula for virtual delivery, using Zoom as the primary platform. Staff and consultants responded to the needs of communities to have accessible trainings at a time when individuals are unable to travel due to the pandemic. Since March, our events and training program has hosted over two dozen community-specific and national events. We continue to research evolving virtual interactive tools to incorporate into upcoming trainings and ways to engage more attendees. We look forward to the year ahead and are anticipating record numbers for our upcoming virtual 39th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference, scheduled for April 11–14, 2021. We hope to see you there! Register at www.nicwa.org/conference.

Models of State ICWA Trainings

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is a pivotal law that provides minimum protections for Indian children and families. Several states are improving their training to ensure state child welfare workers are fully prepared to meet ICWA's requirements when working with Native children and families.

NICWA interviewed 10 state and county jurisdictions to learn about ICWA training models and best practices and to assist the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) in improving their current ICWA training.

We gathered information on who provides the training, how often it's offered, who it's mandatory for, how it's delivered and evaluated, if follow up or coaching is available, and more. From Alaska to New York and in many states in between, there were some clear trends. Since the pandemic began, there has been a large transition to virtual delivery to ensure worker safety. Oftentimes, ICWA training is incorporated into a basic skills, core, or foundations training that new hires receive.

A handful of states, such as Alaska, offer one-on-one coaching with regional ICWA specialists, have an advanced ICWA training, include youth voices in the training, and collaborate with tribal partners. A few states also partner with their local universities to deliver training. In states such as Arizona, Michigan, and Wisconsin, an ICWA refresher training is also available after a child welfare worker previously received the training. Michigan and Tribal STAR in California have implemented an in-person field exercise to engage with tribes and have workers familiarize themselves with the available resources. Nebraska has ICWA advocates in each of its five service areas as a point of contact for worker consultation on specific cases. They meet with state child welfare staff monthly for supervision, similar to Oklahoma, which has a tribal program unit available in each of its regions.

There were also a few unique approaches. Hennepin County in Minnesota requires mandatory ICWA trainings for ICWA workers as well as the county attorneys, investigation teams, screening teams, and administrative staff. Tribal STAR, a training and technical assistance program at the San Diego State University School of Social Work, created the curriculum for the state of California and is able to deliver their content 20 to 30 times per year. Several states also include pre- and post-training resources and materials, such as Tribal STAR's historical trauma e-learning component, which is required before attending their ICWA training. All of the trainings we reviewed included an evaluation of the training, and some also included pre- and post-surveys to help measure skills and knowledge.

As Oregon and other states continue to improve their ICWA training, NICWA expects there will be new models developed that will support improved ICWA practice and compliance.

Updated NICWA Member Benefits

NICWA's membership program is a core part of our identity, and we want to ensure that the benefits our members enjoy are transparent, easy to access, and helpful. A NICWA membership is a sign of commitment to NICWA's mission: dedication to the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children. Due to the nature of their work, it is critical to provide our members, many of whom work directly with children and their families, with up-to-date resources, trainings, and tools, and we focused on those areas when adjusting our membership benefits.

The survey many of you filled out at our last conference, and your participation in NICWA's 2020 listening survey, helped inform our decisions, which is why we have maintained our discounted elder/student rate, further developed our webinars and member videos, and continue to create spaces for networking and conversation. If you'd like to see [our updated member offerings](#) or learn more about NICWA membership, we invite you to learn more on our [website](#). If you have any questions about your membership, please reach out to NICWA's member relations manager, Jeremy Chase-Israel, at membership@nicwa.org.

Webinar Highlight: Tools to Reach Native Youth

This summer, NICWA had the pleasure of partnering with the [Northwest Area Indian Health Board](#) (NPAIHB) on three distinct, compelling webinars covering a range of topics. One of the webinars, entitled [Tools to Reach Native Youth](#), was presented by three NPAIHB staff: Stephanie Craig Rushing, PhD, Michelle Singer (Navajo), and Morgan Thomas. Tools to Reach Native Youth provided insight into an issue we are all having; namely, how to stay connected.

For social workers and other fields in which direct access to a family is critical, the pandemic has only complicated matters. The team at NPAIHB had some great suggestions for low-cost ways to utilize technology when communicating with youth. They provided in-depth information about how they developed programs like [Ask Aunty](#) and explored the wealth of resources hosted on the websites for [Healthy Native Youth](#) and [We R Native](#). Make sure to renew your NICWA membership for access to our monthly member-only webinars.

Contact membership@nicwa.org for more information.

Connect Virtually with NICWA

Member Stories



The NICWA Member Stories YouTube videos began back in August with Alexis Contreras, NICWA's research assistant, who spoke about her experience with intergenerational learning. Since then, NICWA has worked with our members to tie themes like [Back to School](#), [Suicide Prevention and Awareness](#), and [ICWA's Anniversary](#) to the experiences and stories of individuals. NICWA is fortunate to have a diverse membership made up of people, tribes/First Nations, and organizations from all over the United States and Canada, and while we can't connect in person at this time, sharing our knowledge digitally is that much more valuable.

Over the next few months, NICWA will release themes for coming member videos, and if you'd like to participate by sharing your story, please don't hesitate to reach out to Jeremy Chase-Israel, NICWA's member relations manager, at membership@nicwa.org.

We would love to hear from you!



NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association
Protecting Our Children • Preserving Our Culture

NICWA News

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PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

Connectedness, Resilience,
and Persistence

**DON'T MISS THE
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March 1, 2021